Dupl.
(Offprint)

From the Canadian Journal for May, 1864.

ON

ERRATA RECEPTA,

WRITTEN AND SPOKEN.

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(Read before the Canadian Institute, April 2nd, 1864.)

In treating of *Errata Recepta*, written and spoken, I shall confine myself principally to specimens of such as are formal, verbal, and phraseological. By formal, is meant those that are involved in the present FORMS of our letters and numerical symbols.

Errata Recepta, in notion and opinion, would be too wide a field, although a legitimate one here, so far as science is concerned, for it is no doubt one of the functions of this and similar Institutions to detect and remove out of the way, so far as shall be practicable, the phantasms,—the *idola*, as Lord Bacon would say—the vulgar errors as Sir Thomas Browne would phrase it,—which still are the plagues of human knowledge.

I use the title *Errata Recepta*, however, with no feeling that a crusade should be proclaimed against the matters in question, but simply to express that while they can now no longer be said to be wrong, they are nevertheless *per se* erroneous.

I might have said "established errors" in English, but this would have been saying too much;—it would have implied that there were things to be deplored and amended. All this we give up when we adopt the designation *Errata Recepta*. We at once confess them to be what they are.

Moreover I had the less scruple in venturing on this title, because the two words Errata Recepta—besides conveying briefly a particular shade of meaning—are both of them almost as familiar to us as English, the one being seen appended, unfortunately, to most printed books; and the other being associated in the well-known phrase by which the common edition of the Greek Testament is indicated, viz., the *Textus Receptus*.

Some of these peculiar usages in our written and spoken English are the astonishment of foreign scholars. They would puzzle many natives, were they suddenly called upon for the *rationale* of them. We have been taught them in our childhood, as so many dogmas, and we use them without thought. We pass them about like well known coin, of which we have no need to read the inscription; we trace them on our luxurious note-papers and in our account books, and their familiar look is no more suggestive of farther research than the ancient but handy quill perhaps, with which we have written them down.

Errata Recepta arrange themselves into numerous classes. (1) There are those that have arisen from the modifications of form in letters and numerical symbols. (2) There are some that appear in the shape of contractions and abbreviations. (3) There are many that have arisen from the Anglicising of foreign words, especially French, Italian, and German. (4) There are some that spring from the vernacularising of unfamiliar expressions—forcing them to say something that shall, at least, seem to convey an idea. (5) Then we have *errata recepta* which arise from wrong etymologies and from misprints. (6) There are some that spring from grammatical misconceptions and confusion in logic, as where the general is put for the special, and the special for the general. (7) Some are variations in the significance of terms, through the lapse of time. (8) We have *errata recepta* in the quantity or time of vowels in the syllables of derived words. (9) We have *errata recepta* in the nomenclature of persons, places, and things. (10) We have *errata recepta* in regard to the drift of certain popular proverbs or sayings.

I. *Errata Recepta* in letters and numerical symbols:

1. Letters.

To begin at the very beginning—with the elements themselves of words—the alphabet itself: what is this, in modern languages at least, but a series of *errata*—departures from original forms and intentions? *Errata Recepta* now, which there is neither need nor desire to correct. The mind fond of analysis, is, nevertheless not disinclined to recover the original forms, where it is possible to do so; and dwells with some interest on the idea that A, for example, is the head of an ox, only inverted; that Alpha, *i.e. Aleph*, is *ox*, and survives in that sense in *Eleph-as*, *i.e. Aleph-as*, elephant, that animal being designated in early unscientific days as a *bos*, somewhat in the same way as we call the great amphibious creature of the Nile a horse. That B, *beta*, is *beth*—a house—a hut—two wigwams, in fact, now, when you lay the letter on its face. And let it be at once well understood, that the attitudes and postures of letters have been almost infinitely varied. The Easterns generally (the users of Sanskrit excepted) write from right to left; the Westerns (the Etruscans excepted) from left to right: each turning the character accordingly. Hence we must often reverse letters before we can trace their identity. The scribes of intermediate races or tastes, wrote sometimes one line one way, and the next line the other way,—reversing perhaps the letters, as they reversed the direction of the reed. Others, again, arranged their words vertically—column-wise—like the modern Chinese.

From these and other like causes, it is not sufficient even to reverse the letters: we must, in certain instances, lay them on their face—lay them on their back—sustain them at uncomfortable angles—and humour them in other ways, discreetly and patiently, if we would trace the connection between them and their reputed congeners or originals. It is thus that we may, perhaps, at length detect that not only does *aleph* betoken an ox, and *beth* a booth; but that G (*i.e.* hard *c*), is a camel's head and neck; D, a triangular tent door-way; E, a hand in a certain dactylological posture; F *(bau)*, a hook or tent-pin; H, a garth, perhaps a temenos, or sacred enclosure; I (J and Y), again, a hand in proper position; as is also K (C); L, an ox-driver's goad or whip; M, rippling water, the element of its neighbour, N, which is a fish; O (connected with *ayin*), the human eye; P, the mouth seen in profile; Q, the ear; R, the head (also seen in

profile), the occiput, as distinguished from the face; S, the teeth seen in front; T, a kind of dancing cobra; U (V), a hook or tent-pole, as said for F; X, a combination of K and S; Y (as J), a hand in right position; Z, a barbed hook, for catching fish.

We cannot, of course, be sure that we thus track our letters to their prototypes; but human instincts everywhere developing themselves in an analogous way, we can easily conceive that all alphabets are pictorial in their origin; that they represented objects to convey an idea either of the objects absolutely, or of the sounds which the objects represented were supposed to symbolize. What is, in fact, the meaning of *litera?* It is something delineated or drawn *(lino);* the idea conveyed also by γράφω, which is to *pencil* or *draw*—though allied to γλάφω and γλύφω, to hew or carve, as *scribo*, to write, is to *scalpo* and *sculpo;* and the English *write* is to *writan*, properly to cut or engrave, and *wrotan* to plough or root up.

Symbols inscribed by sharp instruments, are strictly not letters (*literæ*) but characters, χαράκτηρες—from χαράσσω—which expresses "scratching," by its very sound. So that in the rude symbols of our Indians, in the canoes, wigwams, and school-boy-fashion figures of men and animals, charcoaled with a burnt stick, or indented with a flint-arrow point on a sheet of birch-bark, we have the veritable *literæ* and *characteres*—the *elementa elementorum*—the simplest forms and originals into which all letters and characters are to be resolved. Examples of the same also, were those sketches on cotton cloth, of the ships, horses, and artillery of Cortez, made by the Mexican Chiefs (1519), for the purpose of giving to Montezuma an idea of the power of the fatal invader.

Interesting specimens of picture-records *in transitu* to letters, may be seen in the beautiful inscription-tablets of Copan and Palenque, represented by Stephens, in his work on Central America. The Chinese and Japanese characters still bear on the face of them the appearance of being sketches of objects, although now conventionally rendered. And the Egyptian phonetic symbols and hieroglyphics, with which we are all more or less familiar, are very slightly disguised. Of these, the enchorial or demotic characters are declared to be modifications.

We can have little doubt, then, that the Chaldaic and Phœnician characters, and with them, for the most part, the Greek and the Latin,—and, through these, the European letters generally have their origin in pictures and sculptures.

When now, in addition to the deliberate drawing and engraving of records on durable substances, there arose the practice of writing with the reed on the papyrus-rind or skins, the celerity of execution which the impetuosity of human thought demands—and demands still in vain, in spite of the assistance of stenography—produced further modifications in letters, until a cursive or script style was formed, which became particularly beautiful in the Greek. What the cursive or script Latin character was we have no means of knowing precisely. We may be sure that Cicero had some convenient and rapid method of securing thought as it wells up within the brain: that he did not make his memoranda in capitals. We may conclude that the familiar Roman script has been in some measure preserved in the traditional styles of the old professional transcribers, who did not always execute their tasks in uncials, but produced MSS. like the Medicean Virgil of the fifth century, in a kind of round hand, which, under the influence of certain peculiar predilections, converted itself, in some nations, into the so-called black letter. This round hand of the *Librarii* was reproduced in the early printed books, in what we call *Italic*, the next remove from the script, in which, in the time of Aldus Manutius, (1516), for example, not prefaces merely, and dedications, but whole volumes were printed. Our present so-called Roman characters, the capitals excepted, are apparently a compromise between this ancient script or Italic, and the black letter or Gothic.

The modern alphabet, then, both as written and printed, is seen to be the result of a series of departures farther and farther from its primitive types—*errata*, indeed, but *errata* which we now willingly describe as *recepta* and no longer *corrigenda*: for as our national speech itself has attained its acknowledged terseness and point by a succession of free clippings in its parts and forms,—so its nimble servitors, the letters, by disencumbering themselves of much that once seemed essential, and was essential, have attained to an efficiency which if not complete is most convenient.

This simplicity of form, involving distinctness, is highly to be esteemed and carefully guarded. English printers of late have been bringing back the style of type, both Roman and Italic, in vogue a century and a half ago, but which had nearly fallen out of ordinary use. A certain feeling of incongruity is at first experienced at meeting with the advanced ideas of the present day in a garb associated in the mind with many obsolete notions of the reign of Anne and the first Georges, and we are moved for a moment to imagine that the

art of printing is "regressing,"—to coin a word at least as good as its correlative and opposite—and we think it strange that any art at this era should "regress." But we soon see that the exquisite legibility secured by the round openness of even the smallest sized character in this style of printing will account for its return to public favour. We have also here, perhaps, a visible sign of a begun reaction against the loose un-Addisonian English, of which, as prevalent in certain quarters, Trench and Alford have been for some time complaining. A lately established clever journal entitled "*The Realm*," is wholly printed in the style referred to: its advertisements, all in beautiful clear brevier and diamond, have the air of paragraphs in the "*Gentleman's Magazine*" in Johnson's day.

In connexion with movements apparently retrograde, we may refer to the rather extravagant mediævalism which threatened a few years ago to render monuments and inscriptions unintelligible to the mass. It was especially enamoured of intricate initial letters, with wide-gadding, low-trailing appurtenances, covering an undue proportion of the page or legendal riband. This was a passing foible in a certain class; but it has left traces too durable in a number of works of art, in glass, metal and stone, which, although in themselves, in many an instance, exquisitely significant, yet fail to interpret themselves, as such monuments ought to do, to the eye and mind of the general public.

A collection of all the alphabets, serious and facetious, which have been designed of late years for ornamental and quasi-ornamental purposes, in magazines, advertisements, and books in general, would be exceedingly curious. "*The Builder*" every week throws out an ingenious and graceful initial idea. In some recent numbers of that periodical there have been beautiful developments of such ideas in representations of imaginary ornamental iron work. Over-intricate illuminated capitals continue to be amusingly and very cleverly caricatured by "*Punch*."

But to return from a digression. It is not many years since Lord Palmerston considered the deterioration of form in English cursive script to be an evil so great and so extended as to call for formal condemnation. Since his memorable dictum on this subject, a good deal of attention has been given in public offices and schools to the essential forms of the script letters; and it is now not unfashionable for signatures to be legible. The plain unaffected autographs of the Prince of Wales and Duke of Newcastle will be remembered.

That there may be no exception to the general return of the letters to a condition of propriety and truthfulness, one erratum in the delineation of the capital G may be worth pointing out and marked *corrigendum*. It is seen sometimes as if it had taken a leap in the air, and there been detained, whereas its bulky form should rather be at rest, down among its lesser fellows, with its distinctive but very subordinate little cedilla (so to call it) dropping below the general line. Capital Y is also sometimes seen, in like manner, unduly exalted. Its loop is simply a mark of difference between it and the letter U, and is not to be taken to represent the stem of the printed capital. Capital Q in script has irrecoverably departed from its essential type. Its beautiful circle is destroyed, and the very sub-ordinate little mark, which here again was simply to be diacritical, is flourished out into great conspicuousness. On the whole Q which used numerally to be worth 90, has degenerated into a large 2.

One more *erratum*, also certainly to be marked *corrigendum*, and I close my remarks on the modifications undergone by the letters.

Since our adoption in money-matters of the decimal system, the time-honoured but never-to-be-forgotten £. s. d. have withdrawn a good deal from the public view. About them there was little mistake. It may be remarked as curious that whilst *denarii* were closely associated with the idea of military pay, being the *stips* which formed the *stipend* of the soldier, the term "soldier" itself sprung out of *solidus*, an enduring trophy of success in some strike on a large scale, although after all, again, it is to *solidus* we owe our *sou i.e. sol.*

But what means the symbol ℔? It ought to be more self-interpreting than it is. An Egyptian or Chinese linguist might detect in it "honesty the best policy"—the upright man standing firm in the midst of a serpentine tortuosity, and resolving so to earn his dollar. Sometimes in script he is seen to incline—to be almost overthrown in the coil. We have here, however, nothing of this sort, but another of our *errata recepta*. The curve which looks like an S in this character is properly no S. It should be made in the reverse way. It will then be seen to constitute, with the vertical or verticals around which it twines, a kind of double P—a character which reads P whichever way it stands This dual P is the initial of the Spanish name of the coin which we call a *dollar*, viz., *Peso*, which is literally *pensum*, all but identical with *pondus*, or *pondo*, *i.e.*, our *Pound*: so that strangely enough our £, which denotes the same thing, viz., *Libra*, a

pound weight, would have answered, at least, as well as ℔ to represent "dollar." It is manifest that the most rational abbreviation would have been a simple D. And this we occasionally see at the head of Canadian and United States figures in English papers, in the absence probably of the usual symbol in the printing office. In some United States papers this character is seen cut in the right way. Would it not be found universally so in the Mexican papers?

On the *erratum receptum* in the word *dollar* itself, I shall remark in the proper place.

Were D employed for Dollar, it might receive the usual mark of contraction across its stem, as in ₤, ℔, &c. Had the symbol ℔ been an abbreviation of *Scudo*, it would have borne this mark transversely. But the silver coins, which we have named *dollars*, were not *Scudi*—were not associated in any way with Italians or their language, but wholly with the Spaniards and their language, in which they are known only as *Pesos*. In the symbol $ rightly formed, then,—which in reality is PP ingeniously monographed into one character, denoting the plural of *peso*, as MSS. denotes the plural of MS.—we have an interesting little historical monument of the early relations of this continent to the native land of its first possessors.

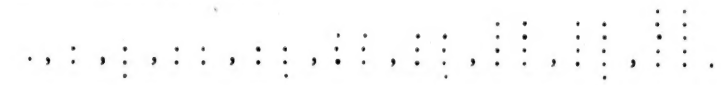
2. We next proceed to consider the Numerals from the point of view selected in this paper. (*a*) And 1st of the Roman Numerals.

The Roman Numerals present some examples of our *errata recepta*. The symbol for ten (X), if not a pictorial representation of the ten fingers outspread, is a conventional mark for ten separate tallies or strokes with a score drawn obliquely across them; whilst V (five) is the half of X, or else one hand expanded; or according to some it is an Etruscan five inverted. The symbol for *fifty*, L, is in reality ⅃, the Etruscan symbol for 50 inverted. D for 500 is really no D, but the half of C I Ↄ written also as an ellipse with its minor axis drawn, a symbol said to be also Etruscan, and denoting 1000, the initial probably, like M for *mille*, of the Etruscan word for that sum. On the principle that IV = 5—1, XL = 50—10, &c.

(*b*) And next of the Arabic Numerals.

Could we compare our Arabic numerals with their native prototypes and these again with their originals, we should see that here also we have a group of our *errata recepta*—of symbols answering their purpose as letters do, albeit they have departed far from their first condition. The first condition of these numerals, however, I think, was

not pictorial, but an arrangement of points shewing the numbers to be named. Somewhat thus:



These groups of points rapidly made, and each respectively connected together by a tracing of the calamus as it passed quickly from one dot to the next, may be conceived of as developing at last into our present Arabic numerals, the line connecting the points denoting also perhaps the order which the eye of the enumerator would swiftly follow.

This line itself may have been suggested by the accidental marks left by readers in the act of calculation. The so-called nailed letters in inscriptions are formed by light straight lines connecting bold punctures which mark out the general form of each character. This process of course produces a set of letters that are angular. In an interesting alphabet of the time of the Seleucidæ (about B.C. 250) the characters are marked out by an increased number of dots, with light lines connecting them, forming the letters called *perlées* by the French, from their *beaded* appearance. In these the angles are converted into curves in such letters as B and O. In a similar manner the numerals formed from the dots of computation speedily had their angles converted into curves, approximating thus to the flowing forms of our present cyphers; just as in rapid writing, the angular capitals also become at length the so-called round hand or cursive script.

The symbol for seven, about which on this hypothesis a difficulty may present itself, is either a combination of the written 6, with a connected point below for *plus* one; or an adaptation of the Greek *zeta* which, though standing sixth in the present Greek alphabet, is in notation the symbol for 7, one letter, *bau, i.e.* the digamma or *f*, having been disused as a letter, though retained as a symbol for 6. It will be noticed also that the final cypher has the value of *ten*, which may help to render rational the notation 10, 20, 30, &c.

I am aware of the theory that the original elements of the Arabic numerals were strokes or tallies, corresponding in number with the quantities indicated, productive also, in the first instance, of a set of square or angular characters. As their origination in points was independently conceived, and is at least equally probable, the supposed process has been briefly detailed. It may here be added that al-

though we call our numerals Arabic, they agree more closely in form with the Sanskrit than they do with the present Arabic.

With the revival of the type of the reign of Queen Ann, there has been a return also to the forms of the numerals then in vogue—forms which in some Offices, for some purposes, had never been disused.

For the sake, apparently, of producing evenness and compactness of line,—a praiseworthy object were we still in the habit of writing only in capitals—great liberties had been taken with the relative magnitudes of numerals by scriveners and type-founders—until the historical contour thereof had been sadly interfered with. Figures high and low, long and short, have been by those unphilosophic artists confounded, and made by a kind of Procrustean treatment to touch parallel limits at top and bottom. But clearly there is as much impropriety in making written figures all of a height, as there would be in doing so with the written letters.

The numerals, then, as they have been rendered of late in the *Saturday Review*, and numerous other notable publications, simply reassert the forms of which without authority they had been deprived; and although seniors will, as is their wont, not readily interrupt a custom learnt in childhood, young arithmeticians will prefer to adopt the revived method, and construct figures as well as letters in accordance with their *rationale*. Thus it will not be long before in schools it will be the practice to make 1's, 2's and 4's neither above nor below the general line of a series of words or figures (with the exception of 4 which extends a little way below); whilst in relation to the general line 6's and 8's will be written with the upper half above it, and 3's, 5's, 7's, 9's, with the lower half below it.

In the Procrustean treatment of figures described above, the symbol for "four" lost its essential form. Whilst being unnaturally stretched to reach the altitude of 8, its main stem snapped, and was ever afterwards simply indicated by a mere touch of the pen across what had been the base of a very perfect little triangle.

Symbols Algebraical and Geometrical are generally modern, and so have not had time to vary much from their first intention. They too are mildly pictorial, taxing the imagination but little. The *minus* sign is the track left by the part withdrawn; the *plus* is the obliteration of this, and so its opposite. In the symbol for division the severed parts have shrunk up into two points. A square is a square, a parabola is a parabola, and so on, But in the rapid execution neces-

sary at modern examinations we see the modification begin which shews us how letters and figures have arrived at their present forms. The "rune" for root ($\surd$) appears to be a written r exaggerated and rent asunder to gain room for the index of the quantity sought. The symbol peculiar to the Integral Calculus ($\int$) is a relic of the *fluents* of Newton.

The Zodiacal and Planetary signs have become considerably disguised. Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Sagittarius, Aquarius, and Pisces still speak, in some manner, for themselves. But it requires the aid of an acute imagination to see a crab in *Cancer*, a lion in *Leo*, a virgin (*query* Proserpine, the Kora) with the ears of wheat in *Virgo*, the scales in *Libra*, a scorpion in *Scorpio*, a piscicaudal goat in *Capricorn*.

In Saturn we dimly discern the *falx* of Chronos; in Jupiter Jove seated with the eagle at his feet; in Mars the shield and spear; in Venus her mirror; in Mercury his caduceus; in Ceres her sickle; in Pallas the gilded spear-head of Athené; in Juno her peacock in its pride; Earth, Uranus, Sun, and Moon are self-interpreting. Vesta is a picture confessed, of her ἑστία with the eternal fire thereon.

If planets are still to be represented by symbols, the invention of man is threatened with exhaustion, for asteroids are discovered in almost every year. They now amount to seventy-two.—The ascending and descending Node (☊, ☋) is a dragon, having apparently the geometric caterpillar's habit of progression.

There is nothing of the picturesque about the notation in Music. Sounds and sentiments are interpreted to the eye by bold points at various altitudes in respect to a system of horizontal lines, by spacings and slurs, and a number of arbitrary marks.

II. I arrive at *Errata Recepta* that appear in the shape of contractions and abbreviations.

1. And (first) of contractions.

There are conventional contractions which in themselves are rational enough; but in some instances we have been taught to use them so early, that we live for many years without detecting that they are anything more than mere symbols.

It has been perhaps not an uncommon experience to use for some years *cwt*, *dwt*, for hundredweight, pennyweight, without realizing their intrinsic composition.

The character denoting "and"—by how many of us was *per se*, as associated with this, the first Latin unconsciously learnt?—employed especially in the contraction for *et cetera*, has in modern manuscript and typography lost its organic form. This is reappearing now in the revived type before referred to. In Macmillan's Treasury Series, and in Cassell's new edition of Shakspeare, we see it again printed *Et* (*Etc.*) Although in rapid writing we do not expect this form to be restored, it is quite proper that we should know what it is that we write down when we execute the spirited flourish which occasionally at the end of a sentence symbolizes the indefiniteness conveniently concealed by it.

On old English coins the "et" has converted itself into a character like a "Z." Thus on a coin in the cabinet of the Canadian Institute is read, EDWARD. D. G. REX. ANGL. Z. FRANC. D. HYB.

This pretended *z* is one of the favorite *sigla* of the scribes. We have it in *viz.* for videlicet, in *oz.* for ounces, and in the symbols for drachms and scruples — where what are apparently *z*'s are simply flourishes of contraction. In V for *versicle*, R for *response*, and R again, for *Recipe*, a slight stroke across a portion of the letter gives the hint of abbreviation.

Domes-Day Book is full of such clerical abridgments. These so-called *sigla* became at an early period such a source of misunderstanding in MSS. that Justinian forbade their use in legal documents.* A very common note of contraction, long retained in English books, was a circumflex for the omission of *m* or *n*; as *cômunicatiô* for *communication*. Hence has arisen our *Co.* for *Company*. *No.* for *number*, is the French *numéro*. *Do. ditto*, is Italian for *dictum* "aforesaid." Titular initials are sometimes wrongly written and pointed. The LL. for the plural *Legum* will be thus seen divided by a period. In Macmillan's Magazine, not long since, L. L. O. O. P. for *Literarum Orientalium Professor* was given without comment, the error being

* Vide Justinian. *Codex. Lib. I. Tit. xv. iii.* 22. Eandem autem pœnam falsitatis constituimus et adversus eos qui in posterum leges nostras per siglorum obscuritates ausi fuerint conscribere. Omnia enim, id est, et nomina prudentium, et titulos et librorum numeros, per consequentias literarum volumus, non per sigla manifestari: ita ut qui talem librum sibi paraverit, in quo sigla posita sunt, in qualemcunque locum libri vel voluminis, sciat inutilis se esse codicis dominum: neque enim licentiam aperimus ex tali codice in judicium aliquid recitare, qui in quacunque sua parte siglorum habet malitias. Ipse autem librarius, qui eas inscribere ausus fuerit, non solum criminali pœnæ, secundum quod dictum est, plectetur; sed etiam libri æstimationem in duplum dominus reddat, si et ipse dominus ignorans talem librum vel comparaverit, vel conflci curaverit, quod et antea à nobis dispositum est, et in Latinâ constitutione et in Græcâ quam ad legum professores dimisimus.

considered perhaps too manifest to require remark. There is a tendency of late years—natural enough—to convert into plain English, the Academic titles, which were once supposed to adhere for life only in Latin, having been conferred in that learned dialect. Hence, we have now M.A., B.A., the English forms of A.M., A.B.—D.M. for M.D., has not yet appeared. Why not?

Divinity for *Theology*, (as *Divinitas* for *Theologia*) is an English solecism without any continental or classical authority. Hence have arisen our D.D. and B.D, as representing the Academic designations, common to all the old historic Universities, S.T.P., S.T.B. (*Sacrae Theologiae Professor*.....*Baccalaureus*.)

The three initial R's are notorious: the four P's are not so well known. In John Heywood's drama (temp. Hen. VIII.) so entitled ("The Four P's") they seriously denote Palmer, Pardoner, Potticary, and Pedlar.

The *y* in the humorously-revived Pepysian "*ye*" for "the," is no *y*, but the Anglo-Saxon character for *th*. This make-shift for a disused letter appears *passim* in the early printed books, and old copies of the English Bible. It is admitted in the modern Polyglots of Bagster for the purpose of gaining space, so as to make the matter in the pages of the several versions respectively correspond. Y*r*, y*t*, y*m*, &c., are also common contractions of *their*, *that*, *them*, &c.; the *e*, *r*, *t*, &c., ought to be placed over the *y*.

2. We come now (secondly) to abbreviations, I mean abridged words, as *errata recepta*.

We all know how unallowable the abbreviation of words is, in letters and finished compositions, although in references, foot-notes, indices, business-reports, medical prescriptions, and a few other similar memoranda, the practice for convenience sake *is* permitted.

There is a tendency, in some degree, to employ these abridgments as complete words. We hear of *consols*. In the familiar language of Algebraists and Geometricians such abbreviations are not uncommon. Among booksellers we hear such barbarisms as 12mo's, 32mo's. Lawyers will tell you of *fi. fa.'s*. Musicians speak of *sol-fa-ing*.*

* Guido Aretino (A.D. 1020) observed, that in a certain chant for a hymn in honour of John the Baptist, the voice ascended in regular gradation upon the first syllable of each half line. To represent the sounds at these points, he adopted the first syllables of the half-lines in the following stanza:

Ut queant laxis *re*sonare fibris *Mi*ra gestorum *fa*muli tuorum *Sol*ve polluti *la*bii reatum,
Sancte Johannes!

For *ut*, *do* was afterwards substituted; and *si* was added.

All crafts, I suppose, have similar technical shortenings. In the political arena we see, if we do not hear, *Rep. by pop.** There is a tendency in such abridged terms to become at length actual words. Our language exhibits a few examples of terms which, originating in abbreviations, have in the course of time become legitimised, although in most cases they have not divested themselves of a certain taint of vulgarity. A hundred years ago, *mobile* (excitable, fickle) was a cant term for the populace. The complete phrase, either founded on some such expression as that of Cæsar, in regard to the Gauls (B. G. 4. 5.) "Galli sunt in capiendis consiliis mobiles,"—or obliquely glancing at the much sought for, but never found, "perpetuum mobile"—was "mobile vulgus." This *mobile* was curtailed at length into our familiar word *mob*, followed at first by the period of contraction, but afterwards written without any such distinction, and so it has passed into the language. Again; *Rhubarb* is now a very respectable word,—representing an equally respectable thing—whether drug or esculent. It is properly, however *Rha. Barb.* manifestly an apothecary's abbreviation of either *Rha Barbaricum*, or *Rheum Barbarum*. *Incog.* and *infra dig.*, have almost lost, in familiar language, their actual character. *Nem. con.* and *crim. con.* are not very ambiguous. We might venture to write *philomath* without a mark of abbreviation. By a kind of synecdoche of the first syllable for the whole term we have made out of *cabriolet, Hackney*, and *Hochheimer, cab, hack, and hock*. From *Grogram* (*grossa grana*, a coarsely woven material) and *Geniévre* (the French corruption of *Juniperus*—further anglicised by us into *Geneva*)—have come the names of two unmentionable liquids. *Cit.* once passed for citizen; but the modern *Gent.* has not yet succeeded in being recognized as *Gentleman;* nor his *pants* as *pantaloons;* nor his *nobs* as *nobiles*. *Fib.* for *Fabula* is one more abbreviation from the Latin. *Pi* or *pie*, denoting certain old Ecclesiastical rules, is the first syllable of *πί-ναξ*, the Table or Index, which detailed them. Type in *pie*, is type that must be re-arranged—put back into the *πί-ναξ* or case. *Pica* is *litera pica-ta*—letter pitch-black. *Magpie* is properly, as given in Shakspeare, *maggot-pie*, i.e. *pica morosa*, the whimsical *Pie*. *Sub.* for subaltern in the army and elsewhere; *Spec.* for speculation at the Exchange; *phiz.* for physiognomy, in the

* † To the "foreign" reader it may be necessary to say that a certain dangerous reef running right across the lake of Canadian politics is thus named. The full form of the appellation is "Representation by Population."

photographic studios; *pos.* for positive, and *mem.* for memorandum, in the office of the Military Secretary, would be all taken as pretty intelligible English. The Germans seem to have adopted the prenomen *Max* for Maximilian. *Cur* has been seriously derived from *curtail*—a hound supposed to be disqualified for the noble chase by caudal abbreviation. *Cheap* is *Cheapside.* Is not *chap* the *chapman* with whom we are transacting business?

At the University, the *hoi polloi* are the *poll; optimes* are *ops;* sophisters are *sophs;* the *domini*—the heads of houses and other magnates—are the dons, *i.e.*, the doms; a vice-chancellor or vice-president is occasionally the *vice,* a term which would have been grievously misunderstood by frequenters of Mysteries and Moralities—and which ought, if anything, to be *vi-ce;* but that, although the correct thing, would sound nearly as bad. At Oxford, Demies are *demi,* i.e., *semi-communarii,* a sort of inferior fellow-commoners. The writers in "Blackwood," by an affectionate and not inelegant prosopopeia sometimes speak of their organ or magazine as *Maga.*

My specimens of words formed in a reverse way, by taking terminations instead of initial syllables, are not so numerous. *Drawing-,* for *withdrawing-room, story* for *history,* are not very striking; and it may be doubted that *brick* is *im-brec.* For the rest, take *cates* from *deli-cates; wig* from *periwig,* an anglicism for *perruque; bus* from *omnibus; bill* from *li-bell;* and finally, *copus,* from *episcopus,* a beverage in certain colleges at Cambridge.*

The few words said to be due to the initials of other words are all doubtful.

Maccabæus, the surname of the Jewish hero, B.C. 168, is attributed to the initials of the Hebrew words which signify "Who among the gods is like unto thee, Jehovah!" AERA has been said to denote "Annus erat, regnante Augusto," although, more probably, it was originally "The Bronzes;" as we sometimes say "The Marbles," meaning the Arundel or other marbles in citing authorities for dates.

* Better known perhaps as Bishop; not peculiar, however, to Cambridge or England. When Hieronymus Jobs, a German Student, was asked by his examiner in Theology, *Quid est episcopus?* he replied, "an agreeable mixture of sugar, pomegranate juice, and red wine." See Mr. Brooks' late Translation of the Jobsiad, a Germ. poem, temp. 1784. The same young gentleman defined "Apostles" to be. "Tall jugs in which wine and beer are kept in villages."

Hip, the thrice-repeated exclamation which precedes the cheer of onset or victory, is *Hierosolyma est perdita!* and should on this supposition be *Hep!* It was the cry heard in German cities when the unfortunate Jewish quarter was to be assailed. *News* has been derived, scarcely in earnest, it is to be imagined, from the initials of the four "airts," N, E, W, S. Like *Abecedarian*, or the *Abcdarium Naturæ* of Lord Bacon, *Elementa* has been said to be composed of L, M, N, the letters whose sounds seem to be heard in the word. The cabinet of Charles II. (1670) was, in no amiable mood, branded as the *Cabal*, from the initials of its five members, Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale. *Cabaler*, in French, signifying *to intrigue*, existed long before, and doubtless suggested the *mot*. This party-term of 1670 has rendered the Hebrew word for occult science familiar to English ears. The absurd expression "Teetotalism," is, I think, connected with the well known little toy, in which the letter T denoted *totum*, and signified "Take-all." By a process the reverse of that indicated above, the abbreviation IHΣ, has been, in an age unfamiliar with Greek, resolved into initials, and interpreted accordingly.

Abbreviated, however, though many of our words are, the English language abhors outward signs of curtailment. We repudiate to the greatest possible extent the apostrophe and the circumflex. We like to have our lines look staid and unbroken. In this respect a page of English resembles a page of Latin. There is a solid, sensible air about them both. A page of French or of Greek will exhibit a succession of elisions duly notified, and the words generally, besides, appear to be in a state of flurry and effervescence with accents and other little diacritical touches—

> "As thick and numberless
> As the gay motes that people the sunbeam."

We dot our i's and cross our t's, simply to distinguish them from similar parts of other letters. This is the only weakness in which we indulge. We dismiss even from poetry elisions and contractions which Shakspeare and Dryden considered not at all ungraceful. We tolerate "t'other" for "the other," "on't" for "on it," "'em" for "them," only in Humorous Verse. How compact and unfrivolous the pages of Tennyson look! Even the unpronounced *-ed* is left to be discovered by the ear of the reader. Notes of exclamation are suppressed.

"Doeth" has become "doth;" "do on," "don;" "do off,"

"doff;" "do out," "dout;" "d' huit," "doit;" and "natheless" gives no sign of its being "ne'er the less." "Sevennight" is now "sennight;" "moneth," "month;" "sithence," "since." "Prithee" and "good bye" we write as we utter, although the first, of course, is "I pray thee;" and the latter, "Deus vobiscum," "God be with you."

Proper names which, as being foreign in their origin, exhibited a few years since, an apostrophe, are now printed without it; and the capital which followed it is reduced to the ranks. Were it the pleasure of Mr. Disraeli to take one more liberty with his patronymic, and terminate it with a *y* instead of an *i*, the next generation would scarcely notice in it any trace of Hebrew origin.

On observing a review lately of the Life of a certain Capodistrias, I by no means recognized in a moment an old acquaintaince, Capo-d' Istrias, whose name was familiar in mens' mouths at the time of the Greek Revolution.

In like manner, Dorsay, Darcy, Doily, Dacier, are now common forms. This Anglicising process in regard to proper names of foreign origin, is, however, nothing new. Dalton, Dexter, Denroche, Dangerfield, and many another family appellation in D, were once written with an apostrophe. Dexter and Dangerfield suffer two violations; the one being properly D'Exter, *i.e.*, of Exeter, and the other D'Aungerville, not involving "field" at all. *Diaper* from *d'Ipres*, and *Dindon* from *d'Inde* are examples well known.

In another set of names which originally began with a vowel, a disguise is produced by the elision of the article; as in Langley, Larcher, &c. In others, again, it is the Anglicised sound only that causes us to forget that they are properly French, as Mallet, Calmet.

In this connexion it may be added that although the pronunciation *Pree-do* may be cultivated in some families, plain Cornishmen, among whom the name is common, persist in making it *Pri-deaux*, with an *x*, just as the rest of England will say *Vaux* and *Jacques*. And so I remember at Cambridge, Professor Prime's name continued as it was, notwithstanding an effort at one time to improve it into de la Prime. So to recal Seymour and Sinclair to Saint Maur and St. Clair is as bootless an undertaking as it would be to resolve back into Hugh de Bras, the immortal Hudibras.

(To be continued.)